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ABSTRACT

Second year operations of this mobile center have validated many of the assumptions on which it was founded (see ED 031 243), including a reduction in the communications gap between Contra Costa College and the community at large. While attempts to compare this year's results with last year's can be considered premature, some findings may be of interest. During the preceding 9-month period, over 700 hours of service were provided. This includes individual and small group counseling for 150 people. Of these 150, approximately 50 per cent had an annual family income of $4000 or less, and over half had left high school by the eleventh grade. Sixty-five per cent of the 150 were also either too young to work, or experienced employment difficulties due to a lack of education. Of these, 29 per cent were subsequently placed in college, 11 per cent in job training, and 30 per cent referred to other agencies for counseling or job placement. Of those not placed, many had come to the center only for information, and could not have been placed anyway. A questionnaire completed by 80 counselees indicated that 80 per cent came to the counseling center to receive college or career planning information, 93 per cent felt they were helped there, and 100 per cent would not only use the center again, but would also recommend that their friends use it. (JO)

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EVALUATION OF THE SECOND YEAR OF OPERATION OF THE CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE MOBILE COUNSELING CENTER

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Submitted by

Anthony T. Gordon, Counselor

To

The Governing Board of the Contra Costa Junior College District

The Mobile Counseling Center Advisory Board

Plan of Action for Challenging Times, Educational Clearinghouse, Inc.

JC 700 235

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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INTRODUCTION

Contra Costa College is an accredited, two-year public junior college providing state college and university parallel curricula and a wide range of vocational-technical programs designed to train students for immediate employment. Any person who is 18 years of age or is a high school graduate is eligible to attend the college.

As a result of its open door policy and its diverse offerings, the student body varies widely in interest, aptitude, and ability. Thus, comprehensive counseling and guidance services are provided to help students with their educational, vocational, and personal goals.

Even though the college is now drawing a diverse student population and a high proportion of local high school graduates, much more could be done in the way of encouraging attendance by all those in the community who might benefit from the junior college offerings. . . .

. . .Although some effort is now made to work through high school counselors in encouraging students to attend Contra Costa College, this effort is obviously not as effective as it might be. In addition, there is an attrition rate of approximately 30% between the start of the ninth grade and graduation in the local Richmond Unified School District. Therefore, there are undoubtedly many youths in the community who might profit from a junior college program but who may not know they are entitled to attend. Certainly they have not been encouraged to attend.

It is quite likely that those potential students who receive the least encouragement for college attendance are concentrated in the poverty pockets of the area. The college has only recently discovered that the attendance of financially deprived students is not as high as expected.

(Bessire et.al. 1967, pp. 3-4.)

The alert reader should find a number of serious questions implicit in the preceding paragraphs. Some of the more obvious questions are as follows:

1. What is the role of the community college?
2. To what extent should the community college go to fulfill its stated objectives?
3. What should the community college do to encourage attendance by local high school graduates?
4. What should the community college do to offset the apparent ineffectiveness of conventional methods of recruiting?
5. Should the community college be concerned with the plight of the high school dropout? If so, to what extent?
6. How much information does the Richmond community have about Contra Costa College's entrance requirements and program offerings?
7. What is the relationship between the adequacy of information dissemination and low enrollment?
8. What kind of image does the Richmond community have of Contra Costa College?

The 1969 Report on Mobile Counseling stated unequivocally that Contra Costa College could no longer afford the luxury of turning away from its responsibilities to seriously seek resolutions to the above mentioned questions. Since the 1969 report was published, several programs have been implemented which would suggest that Contra Costa College is at least concerned about the fulfillment of its objectives as a community college.

During the Spring Semester of 1969, a new department of Special Programs was organized. Out of that new department came an Ethnic Studies program, an expansion of the counseling program, tutorial program, and financial aids program.

Some readers might question the relevance of mentioning Special Programs in this report; and rightly so. At first glance, these programs appear to be completely separate from Mobile Counseling. The fact of the matter is that they are part and parcel to the entire Mobile Counseling effort.

During its first year (academic year 1968-69), the Mobile Counseling Center operated almost exclusively as an information center and a counseling center with little emphasis on recruitment. Recruitment was not emphasized for several reasons; (1) The Mobile Center was not fully operative until November of 1968, (2) a significant portion of the earlier months was spent trying to determine the direction the Mobile Center would take relative to the expressed needs of the Richmond community, and (3) the question of what would happen to students who were recruited through the Mobile Center had not been fully resolved. Although nine students were enrolled in Contra Costa College via the Mobile Counseling Center during the 1968-69 school year, that number in no way represents the number that could have been enrolled if the college had made provisions for retaining them until graduation.

During its second year (academic year 1969-70) the Mobile Counseling Center included recruitment as a primary part of its function. The main reason for the increased emphasis on recruitment was because the Richmond community, including referral agencies, seemed to view the Mobile Center more as a recruitment center for Contra Costa College than a job placement center. After it was made clear that it was not a job placement center, more individuals were referred to the Mobile Counseling Center with an expressed interest in going to college than ever before. Another reason for the increased emphasis on recruitment this year was because, as a counselor, I felt more comfortable recruiting, because Contra Costa College was making a concerted effort to facilitate the intellectual, educational, and vocational development of all of its students, regardless of their economic, social, and educational status.

With the advent of the Division of Special Programs, students could be recruited into the college with reasonable assurance that they would receive supportive services necessary to help them stay in college. Recent student protests on college campuses have taught us that it is unwise to recruit poor and academically underdeveloped students into college without providing meaningful supportive services such as financial aid, tutoring, and counseling.

There appears to be growing concern among community college personnel and their supporters, at all policy-making levels in California, for making intellectual, educational, and vocational attainment genuinely possible for all community college students. Senate Bill 164 is evidence of this growing concern. It summarily encourages local community colleges by providing financial assistance to establish and develop programs directed to identifying, recruiting, and retaining those students affected by language, social, and economic handicaps. Actions such as the appointing of minority group members to community college accreditation teams, lend support to the belief that this concern is genuine.

All of these programs and/or actions have had a positive impact upon the success of the Mobile Counseling Center. While it is still too early to document the full extent of that impact, it is appropriate to say the existence of these programs and/or actions have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the Mobile Counseling Center.

Proving the worth of an experiment of this magnitude is no easy task. The Mobile Counselor often feels rejected, impotent, and very much alone. There are times when he needs a counselor, a shoulder to cry on, a vote of confidence to reassure him that someone cares. Were it not for the enthusiastic support of many individuals, on campus as well as in the community at large, perhaps a report of this nature would not have been possible. I am eternally grateful to all individuals, groups, agencies, and community organizations who were even remotely involved with the success of this project.

Section 1

DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENT

Background:

> Even though the college is now drawing a diverse student population and a high proportion of local high school graduates, much more could be done in the way of encouraging attendance by all those in the community who might benefit from the junior college offerings. A committee of faculty and students recently met to study this problem, and many instances were cited of the college's failure to communicate with potential students. It was pointed out by one student, who was a high school dropout and is now student body president, that many potential students were unaware that a high school diploma is not required for admission. He, himself, discovered only by accident that he would be admitted. Another student had visited a local high school recently and had found seniors in that school to be uninformed and misinformed about the junior college. One faculty member, in his own spare time, had attempted to recruit students for his . . . program, and has discovered that most students are not aware of his or other . . . programs. (Bessire et. al., 1967.)

The concept of mobile counseling grew out of an almost desperate need on the part of the administration of Contra Costa College to better serve the Richmond community. It was assumed that if one student was uninformed about the entrance policies and programs of this college, perhaps many other potential students were equally uninformed. It was quite evident at that time, and still is to a large degree, that the extensive use of mass media as a means of disseminating information was at best ineffective.

Numerous attempts to alleviate the problem were made, but with little success. Articulation agreements between the college and local high schools raised hopes--not enrollment. Direct contact with community agencies did little to solve the problem. Much consideration was given to the notion of establishing a centrally located counseling center off campus, but after much deliberation, that idea was abandoned in favor of a more flexible center--a counseling center on wheels--the Contra Costa College Mobile Counseling Center.

A proposal for funding the Mobile Counseling Center was developed in 1967 and sent to various public and private agencies. Despite the uniqueness of the concept, all of the agencies, contacted rejected the proposal. However, many individuals were confident that this concept could add new dimensions to the field of counseling and indeed to the whole field of education. Then President Ray Dondero was perhaps the strongest supporter of the concept. He worked tirelessly to change an idea, which was then a dream, into an operation which is now a reality. The project was finally funded by the Contra Costa Junior College District which provided approximately 75% of the funds, in cooperation with Plan of Action for Challenging Times, Educational Clearinghouse, which provided approximately 25% of the funds.

Purposes:

The purposes of the Mobile Counseling Center are:

to extend the counseling services of the college to the communities which it serves.

to provide counseling services to persons who otherwise would not make us of them, especially those who have dropped out of high school, those who completed high school but are employed, those who live in disadvantaged areas and those who do not respond to ordinary communications approaches.

to bridge the communications gap between the college and the community by building a working relationship with all community agencies--both public and private.

to provide immediate access to essential information relative to educational opportunities, educational programs, job up-grading programs, financial aids and career planning.

to minimize the frustrations caused by referrals and re-referrals, that necessarily take place in a more centralized setting, by working with the individual in his immediate environment.

to provide individual and group counseling services designed to foster meaningful decision making.

to strengthen the image of Contra Costa College in the Richmond community.

to encourage students to attend Contra Costa College.

Scope:

The Mobile Counseling Center operates exclusively in western Contra Costa County and specifically in Richmond and the unincorporated areas north of Richmond. The geographical area in which the Mobile Counseling Center operates is limited for practical reasons.

Presently, the staff of the Mobile Counseling Center consists of one full-time counselor (who is also the driver) and one student clerical assistant. Because of the present size of the staff, it would be physically impossible to serve a larger area. An extension of the service area would also reduce the effectiveness of the operation.

Another, perhaps the most important, reason for limiting the service area of the Mobile Center is because the largest number of minority and disadvantaged people live in western Contra Costa County.

"Three-fourths of the overall growth in the western county's population during the last five years is due to the increase in the Negro population. And all of the increase in the Negro population was confined to the western strip." (Wilson, 1965.)

Section II

IMPLEMENTATION

Description of the Unit

The Mobile Counseling Center is presently housed in a 24' X 7' Beechwood, self-propelled, mobile home. During the planning stages of the operation, some consideration was given to a towed unit (trailer) with similar dimensions, but the idea was soon abandoned for some very practical reasons. First, a towed vehicle would be considerably more expensive. The total cost of a towed vehicle would have to include the cost of its prime mover (a car or small truck). Secondly, a towed vehicle would be difficult to maneuver on narrow city streets. Parking on city streets would be virtually impossible since most parking spaces are designed for automobiles. By choosing a self-propelled vehicle over a towed one, miscellaneous problems related to vehicle licenses, special operator permits, inclement weather, etc. have been reduced to a minimum.

The interior is custom-made to the specifications of the counselor. During the Summer of 1968, a considerable number of hours were spent consulting firms which specialize in the fabrication of mobile office interiors. After consulting several firms in the immediate San Francisco Bay Area, the decision was made, for budgetary reasons, to use campus personnel and private contractors to complete the Mobile Center's interior. With the expert assistance of the departments of Administrative Services and Environmental Design, the task of designing and decorating the Mobile Center was completed.

The finished product is both beautiful and functional. It is beautiful because of its elegantly coordinated colors. The walls and ceiling are paneled in ash brown and accented with bright gold carpeting, rich walnut furniture and woven wood curtains trimmed with dark brown and gold yarn. The interior of the mobile unit is functional because of the attention given to space utilization. It is divided into two 10' X 7' compartments, separated by a soundproof wall and pocket door. The front compartment has three stationary chairs (including the driver's seat), two portable chairs, three portable tables, and a filing cabinet. Although it has been used primarily as a reception room, this compartment could be used to serve a variety of other purposes such as group counseling, showing slides or filmstrip, displaying vocational information, etc. The rear compartment is equipped with two stationary chairs, one portable chair, a filing cabinet, a desk and a bookcase. This compartment was designed exclusively for individual counseling and has been used extensively for that purpose.

The Mobile Center is also equipped with a converter which is a device for changing "battery" voltage to "house" voltage. It will produce 110 volts and 450 watts continuously. This device gives the Mobile Center the added capability of utilizing small electrical fixtures such as lights, projectors, viewers, etc.

Plan of Action

Unlike the first year, the Mobile Counseling Center began operating during the first week that classes opened for the fall semester. It is appropriate to mention at this time that the Mobile Center operated unofficially for six weeks during the summer of 1969* while recruiting students for the College Readiness program.

* Unofficial operation means that the counselor was not compensated for his services. He was serving a 150-hour supervised internship toward completion of requirements of the Master of Arts Degree in Counseling from San Francisco State College.

The first three days of the Fall Semester were spent discussing the aims and goals of the Mobile Counseling Center with the appropriate administrators. Consideration was given to the feasibility of using last year's report as the basis for this year's plan of action. The 1969 operational plan was strictly community oriented because it would be impossible for one counselor to serve the high schools and the broader community at the same time. This issue arose again this year and was rejected for the same reasons as last year. A thorough review of the 1969 report revealed that there were still many unanswered questions under the original plan, and therefore it would be wise to continue this operation using last year's plan including the stated aims and goals.

The Aims and Goals

1. To extend the counseling services of the college to the community in an effort to provide services to the entire community rather than to a small segment.

2. To provide direct educational, vocational, economic, motivational, and personal counseling assistance to minority group members and youngsters in poverty areas of the Richmond community.

3. To establish lines of communication between Contra Costa College and communities agencies, schools, churches, recreation centers, and community action organizations, --for purposes of:

    a. improving articulation
    b. building a positive image of the college
    c. bridging the existing communications gap between the college and the community
    d. facilitating recruitment to the college
    e. disseminating information relative to education and occupational training

Immediately after the discussions with the administrators about the operational plan, the Mobile Counseling Center began its second year of service. Several weeks later, a meeting of the Mobile Counseling Center Advisory Committee was called. The purpose of the meeting was two-fold; first, to critically evaluate the 1969 report on Mobile Counseling; secondly, to hear reactions to the operational plan.

The Advisory Committee raised questions similar to those raised earlier by the administrators: Is it possible to extend the Mobile Counseling services to the local high schools? Does the number of contacts in the broader community justify limiting the service? and Can a single counselor serve the high schools and the community? After a lengthy discussion on these and other questions, the Advisory Committee unanimously agreed that it would be more practical to follow the original plan of operation than to alter it.

Most committee members felt that a liaison between the college and the community is essential. Likewise, they expressed concern for the plight of the high school drop out. Youngsters in school have immediate access to educational and career guidance counselors while most high school drop outs do not. In summary, the committee expressed strong support for the original plan of operation.

Public Relations

It is difficult to think of the public relations campaign as being something other than an on-going process. Brochures and progress reports were distributed at every opportune time and place. Many nights, weekends, and holidays were spent speaking to civic and social organizations such as Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, advisory committees, citizens committees, etc. about the Mobile Counseling Center. Although this type of public relations work is not required of the counselor, it is absolutely essential to the overall success of the project. These groups are potentially the source of many referrals, but more significantly, they represent all facets of the community which should be well informed about their community college.

While it is true that the public relations campaign is an on-going process, it involves more than merely attending meetings to address civic and social groups; the task of maintaining good rapport with referral agencies is considerably more demanding. It requires a maximum of concentration and deliberation. One must be constantly alert to changes in organizational structure, changes in personnel, sensitive to, but detached from, inter-agency conflict, willing to deal with criticism and able to tolerate delays or postponements of appointments.

A recent visit to one agency, which had worked very closely with the Mobile Counseling Center last year, revealed that there had been a complete turn-over in personnel. Obviously, this discovery necessitated the establishment of new working relationships. At least two organizations had newly appointed directors, only one of whom was informed about the Mobile Center. One agency relocated and, as a result, all contact with that agency was lost for more than a month. Conflict, especially in federally funded agencies, is commonplace, and the counselor must strive to remain neutral in the midst of demeaning gossip. Of all the factors mentioned in the task of maintaining good rapport with referral agencies, those of dealing with criticism and tolerating postponements are perhaps the most difficult, for they are very personal and often call for emotional restraint at times when it is most difficult to elicit.

It was assumed that the job of maintaining good working relationships with agencies would not be nearly as taxing as establishing them, but that assumption was soon found to be fallacious. It took only a few days to realize that in approximately six weeks of summer, during which the Mobile counselor was not making regular visits, many agencies had almost forgotten about the Mobile Counseling Center. This tendency to forget is, at least, partially attributable to the brief existences of many experimental programs similar for the Mobile Counseling Center. Another factor related to this tendency of agencies to forget is the nature of the agencies themselves, as mentioned in previous paragraphs.

The same kinds of public relations activities which were carried on at the beginning of the first year were found to be extremely useful throughout this year. Newspaper articles, television shows, staff conferences, personal visits with counselors, and randomly driving through neighborhoods -- all played a vital role in keeping the Mobile Counseling Center in the forefront of the public eye.

Although large numbers of private citizens do not normally respond to newspaper articles, questions generated from them by agency personnel usually are the bases of some exciting conversations. Two very accurately written news articles were published regarding the Mobile Counseling Center this year. One was published by the Oakland Tribune, the other by the award winning Contra Costa College newspaper -- the Advocate. The Mobile Counseling Center had the good fortune of being selected as the topic of two television productions during the 1969-70 school year. The first, a 30-minute production, was produced by KOVR-TV in the Sacramento-Stockton area. The second one, a five-minute news feature, was produced by KQED-TV of San Francisco. Both of these productions contributed immeasurably to the success of this year's public relations campaign. Despite the value attached to newspaper articles and television productions, activities such as staff conferences, personal visits with counselors, and randomly driving through neighborhoods were equally indispensable to the over-all success of the campaign.

Miscellaneous

In addition to parts of the implementation phase previously mentioned, there is one other essential part which deserves mention at this time -- repairs and installation of new equipment. As a result of vandalism, which took place during the summer vacation, windshield wipers and rear-view mirrors had to be replaced before the Mobile Center could be considered road worthy. These repairs were made, as was the installation of electrical equipment, during periods when no appointments were scheduled.

Section III

PROCEDURE

Administration and Staff Organization

The staff of the Mobile Counseling Center consisted of one administrator, one full-time counselor, a part-time secretary and a student clerical assistant. The organizational structure was such that the counselor was directly responsible to the administrator while the clerical personnel were responsible to the counselor.

Due to the nature of this project, the job specifications of the counselor were flexible. His mobility did not permit him to be part of an organizational structure that is prevalent in a more centralized setting. There was no rigid requirement to attend department meetings, staff conferences, etc.; however, there was a rather dubious requirement to submit a weekly itinerary to the administrator. Although the organizational structure was flexible, there were obviously some guidelines which were utilized as a basis for operation. The following summary statements should give the reader an indication of the duties and responsibilities of each staff member within the organizational structure.

Administrator - The primary responsibility of this position, relative to the Mobile Counseling Center, is the duty to provide administrative services such as procuring funds, equipment, providing on-campus counseling for incoming students, etc., to supervise and coordinate the overall operation. It is appropriate to mention at this time that there were numerous ungainly efforts to supervise and coordinate, while efforts to render administrative services were grossly lacking.

Counselor - The primary responsibility of the counselor was to drive the vehicle and provide counseling services to the Richmond community within the context of the objectives of the Mobile Counseling Center.

Part-Time Secretary - This position was actually a full-time position within the Counseling department with the added responsibility to assist the Mobile Center by taking telephone messages, keeping appointment records, and typing correspondence on an as-needed basis.

Student Clerical Assistant - This position was created for a work-study student. However, it has never been satisfactorily filled, because every student who has attempted to work in this capacity has had difficulty arranging her class schedule so that it would conform to that of the Mobile Counseling Center. The responsibility of this position was to go with the Mobile Counseling Center and perform such clerical duties as assigned by the Counselor.

Referrals - During the period beginning June 24, 1969, through May 11, 1970, over 335 persons were referred to the Mobile Counseling Center from the following referral sources:

Contra Costa College
Contra Costa County Department of Social Service
Contra Costa County Probation Department
Contra Costa County Job Training Center
Gompers Continuation High School
Richmond Service Center
Nystrom Elementary School
State Department of Employment, Human Resources Development
Job Upgrading - Human Resources Development (Grove St.)
Job Upgrading - Human Resources Development (Macdonald Ave.)
Job Upgrading - Human Resources Development (Rumrill Road)

Client Initiated Referrals
People Pledged for Community Progress
San Pablo - Parchester Community Organization

Referral Procedure - The only criterion established for referral to the Mobile Counseling Center was that the client expressed the willingness and the need to utilize the services provided. Obviously, if he wanted to enter college or a job training facility, he would have to meet the minimum qualifications set forth by the institution or agency.

The referral procedure was based on the assumption that many high school dropouts, unemployed high school graduates, displaced workers, etc. were already registered with one or several state, county and local social service agencies. Thus a reciprocating agreement was established between the Mobile Counseling Center and most state, county and local social service agencies, community action groups, clubs, religious groups, and special schools in and around the City of Richmond.

The terms of the agreement were such that each of the various agencies could refer clients to the Mobile Counseling Center and the Mobile Center could, in turn, refer clients to the agencies. Clients referred to the agencies by the Mobile Center were given a referral card which consisted of an introduction card addressed to a specific person within an agency and a detachable self-addressed post-paid disposition card which provided the Mobile Center with information regarding the agency's disposition of the case. When clients were referred to the Mobile Counseling Center by an agency, follow-up information was provided to the agency by way of a personal visit to the agency by the Mobile Counselor.

The process of referring clients to the Mobile Counseling Center was a simple one. Agencies, individuals and other referral sources would leave a telephone message with the part-time secretary; the Counselor would return the telephone call to the respective referral as soon as possible and schedule an appointment. Usually, telephone calls were returned late in the afternoon of the day the message was received.

Most initial interviews were coordinated by the referral source, e.g. if a counselor from the Department of Human Resources Development (California Department of Employment) referred a client to the Mobile Center, that Counselor would obtain, from the client, information necessary to schedule an appointment. The Mobile Counselor would then, at a designated time and place, meet the referring counselor and the client for the initial interview. Follow-up interview appointments were usually made between the Mobile Counselor and the referred client.

During the 1968-69 school year approximately 95% of all referrals were made by various state, county, and local public service agencies. During the 1969-70 school year, only 65% of all referrals came from agencies while the remaining 35% came from individual citizens who had been referred to the Mobile Counseling Center by a former client. This year's percentages suggest that word-of-mouth communication is having a noticeable effect upon the operation of the Mobile Counseling Center. Of greater significance is the implication that former clients feel that the Mobile Counseling Center is important enough to tell their friends about it.

Counseling Procedure - When a client entered the Mobile Counseling Center for the first time, the counselor began the initial interview with three goals in mind: 1) to create a cordial atmosphere which would serve as a basis for a continuing relationship, 2) to ascertain personal data necessary to understand the client's background, 3) to help the client realistically focus on his problem within the context of his perception of it.

The creation of a cordial atmosphere was an on-going process which often began with some appropriate introductory statement such as: a comment about the weather, responding to client comments about the Mobile Center, complimenting the client for arriving early for his appointment, etc. These introductory statements were not a "put on," but a way of making the client feel comfortable--a way of making him feel accepted. It was assumed that many poor youth, minority youth, high school dropouts, etc. are justifiably suspicious of helping services, such as the Mobile Center, because such services, regardless of their true intentions, have often proved to be a source of disappointment and frustration to these youth. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that a special effort be made to help each client develop an attitude of "basic trust" with respect to the Mobile Counseling Center.

The second objective of the initial interview was to obtain as much personal data from the client as possible without making him feel as though he was being interrogated. This was accomplished in two ways. First, after a brief, casual conversation-the client was given a personal data card which contained essential questions such as name, age, home address, marital status, educational level, vocational goal, reason for coming to the Mobile Center, etc. Secondly, the client was asked to elaborate on statements which he had written on the card: "Why did you drop out of high school?" or "How much do you know about the career field which you have chosen?"

These two methods of obtaining personal data about the client have proven to be very effective over the last two years. While they still leave something to be desired, the combined use of these two methods 1) eliminated the need for a lengthy form which most of these clients would probably have had difficulty filling out, and 2) minimized potential frustrations by giving the client an opportunity to verbalize at a non-threatening intellectual level rather than at a highly threatening emotional or feeling level.

The third goal of the initial interview was often difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve; it is more difficult to articulate. Obviously, the first step toward making a realistic evaluation of a problem would be to clearly define it. This had to be done in a manner which would not suggest, to the client, that he was being "psyched out." A simple question, "Why do you feel you need counseling?" seemed to be the most effective means to that end.

Once the problem was clearly defined, a determination was made by the counselor as to whether the problem was a result of the client's attitude, his educational development, a lack of information, a lack of financial resources, or some combination of all four factors. As is so often the case in the field of counseling, the determination of the problem was not based on scientific appraisal; rather, it was based on empirical evidence obtained from three or more counseling sessions with each client.

After the cause of the problem had been determined, it became necessary to give serious consideration to individual differences as well as the uniqueness of the problem. In many instances, the problem could be solved without utilizing external resources. Such was the case with a client who was referred to the Mobile Center, ostensibly because she lacked certain skills necessary to make her a proficient employee and therefore needed to take some courses to upgrade her skills. The initial interview revealed the real problem as being personal conflicts between the client and her supervisor. After a number of counseling sessions with her, she was able to resolve her conflict and she is now reported to be a much better employee.

In some instances the problem could not be solved without utilizing external resources. Recently, a client came into the Mobile Center on the recommendation of a friend. The client was a high school drop-out and wanted to enroll in Contra Costa College immediately. Enrollment was impossible at that time, because the semester was more than six weeks old. After several counseling sessions, this client was referred to another agency. The agency reported that the client agreed to enroll in a short-term job training program while awaiting the commencement of Contra Costa College's Summer Readiness Program.

In other instances, there were no immediate, foreseeable solutions to the client's problem. The client was informed of this as soon as such a decision was reached; with the understanding that he could continue in counseling with hope that a solution would be forthcoming or that he could terminate the relationship immediately.

The reader might question that these procedures are not unique, since most competent counselors work in a similar fashion. However, it can be said, unequivocally, that the Mobile Counseling Center has one quality that many counseling centers don't have--flexibility. More specifically, the Mobile Counseling Center has unprecedented flexibility with respect to the amount of time it can devote to one client. Although the average interview lasted approximately fifty minutes, an interview could last from five minutes to five hours; and there have been a number of interviews at both ends of the continuum. Most clients had an average of three follow-up interviews, but that figure is not indicative of the full range. Follow-up interviews ranged from "no shows" (people who made an appointment for an initial interview but didn't keep it) to as many as twelve, with each one scheduled a week apart.

The Mobile Counseling Center operates on the premise that the more follow-up interviews a client has, the better his chances are for some kind of tangible results. This premise became policy as a result of the counselor's experiences during the 1968-69 school year. During the first few months of the year, a number of clients entered the Mobile Center and departed without the benefit of a follow-up interview. For all practical purposes, those clients received little help from the Center. Later, it was found that those clients who returned for follow-up interviews were most often placed. They were either enrolled in college, referred to an outside agency for job placement, recommended and accepted for job training, etc. That policy is currently in effect and each client is appraised of it during the initial interview.

Section IV

FINDINGS

The data reported in this section focuses on several major issues surrounding the rationale for the Mobile Counseling Center. First, it vividly supports many, if not all, of the assumptions on which it was founded. It was assumed that there was-and still is to a lesser degree-a communications gap between the college and the community at large; and the Mobile Center could help to bridge that gap. The fact that agencies of the community, indeed the community at large, have cooperated with the Mobile Center from its inception is evidence in support of that assumption. Before the coming of the Mobile Center only a few community agencies felt that they had a reliable source of information, now they rely, almost exclusive, upon the Mobile Counseling Center for that purpose.

Secondly, it highlights numerous community needs which escape ordinary perception; the most pressing one being the need for educational counseling for hig school dropouts and unemployed high school graduates. This is evidenced by the number of individuals in these categories who utilized the services of the Mobile Counseling Center. They came in an apparent state of desperation, looking for empathy and genuine assistance. Many clients were satisfied with what they found as evidenced by their willingness to enroll in college and various job training programs. Perhaps those clients wouldn't have accepted those challenges without the help of the Mobile Counseling Center.

Finally, it serves as food for thought for persons interested in working with high school dropouts, and poor and minority youth. Needless to say, the full potential of the Mobile Counseling Center has not yet been realized. Its capabilities are limited only by the counselor's physical and mental limitations.

This section is based only on the individuals and groups served by the Mobile Counseling Center during the 1969-70 school year. It will reflect general characteristics, of the clients, such as age, sex, ethnic group, educational achievement, marital status, family income, and career choice. In addition to general characteristics of the clients, topics pertinent to work history, personal needs, expectations of the counselor, placements, and clients' attitudes about the Mobile Counseling Center will be discussed. Finally, the Counselor will discuss his problems and personal experiences of the 1969-70 school year. There was no effort made to make comparisons between this year's findings and last year's because: 1) it is the writer's opinion that the Mobile Center has not been operating long enough to warrant such comparisons, 2) the samples are so small that no significant differences, between them, could be realized. However, this is not to suggest that the data are not valuable in their present form. With the advent of the Contra Costa College Mobile Counseling Center has come many other projects of a similar nature. These data could conceivably be compared with the findings of other similar projects. They could possibly be used in the writing of project proposals, and hopefully they will be used as part of a longitudinal study of the characteristics of Contra Costa College students.

These findings represent approximately 700 hours of service spread over a nine-month period. They do not reflect the additional time spent in meetings and conferences, nor the time involved in the compilation of this report.

During this period approximately 350 people utilized the services of the Mobile Counseling Center, 150 of those received individual and small group counseling. Of the 150 individual and small group contacts, 80 had three or more follow-up interviews.

TABLE I AGE (N=350)

Age Level	% of Total Contacts
10-13	29
14-17	26
18-21	28
22-25	13
26-29	1
30-33	.9
34-37	.6
38-41	.6
42-45	.9

TABLE II SEX (N=350)

	% of Total Contacts
MALE	57
FEMALE	43

TABLE III	ETHNIC GROUP	(N=350)
		% of Total Contacts
BLACK		94
BROWN		3
WHITE		3

N = 150
N (Female) = 48
N (Male) = 102

TABLE IV	EDUCATION COMPLETED	
% of Female	% of Male	% of Total (N)
8th 0	8th 8	8th 5
9th 0	9th 13	9th 9
10th 31	10th 22	10th 25
11th 42	11th 24	11th 30
12th 12	12th 19	12th 17
GED 0	GED 10	GED 7
13th 15	13th 4	13th 7

N = 150
N (Male) = 102
N (Female) = 48

TABLE V	MARITAL STATUS	
% Single	% Single W/Dependents	% Married W/Dependents
Female 29	42	29
Male 66	12	22
Total (N) 54	21	25

N (Female) = 48
N (Male) =102
N =150

TABLE VI FAMILY INCOME

Annual Income in Thousand Dollars	% Female	% Male	% Total (N)
Below 2	21	20	20
2-4	33	29	30
5-7	15	18	17
8-10	4	7	7
Above 10	2	1	1
Unknown	25	25	25

N (Female)= 48
N (Male) =102
N =150

TABLE VII CAREER CHOICE

Career Categories	% Female	% Male	% Total (N)
Professional	23	22	23
Semi-Professional	35	16	22
Technical	13	14	13
Skilled	4	10	8
Undecided	25	38	34

Tables IV, VI, and VII, reveal some rather interesting facts which deserve comment at this time. Table IV indicates that more than 50% of the population (N=150) dropped out of high school in the tenth and eleventh grades. Table VI shows that approximately 50% of the population (N=150) had an annual family income of four thousand dollars or less. It is reasonable to assume that the actual percentage is much larger than 50% in view of the large percentage of clients who said they had no idea as to what their family income was. Table VII shows that nearly 50% of the population (N=150) expressed an interest in professional or semi-professional occupations. Obviously, many inferences can be drawn from this data, the most common one being that poor people are usually low achievers, therefore they have low ability and students with ability often make unrealistic career choices. The writer subscribes to a different theory; there is, indeed, a cause and effect relationship between economic status and educational attainment. Poor people live in poor neighborhoods where schools are structually sub-standard with respect to space, beauty, and educational facilities. Poor neighbor-

hoods and poor schools breed educationally underdeveloped people who choose professional careers because, in many cases, they are taught to believe that the only worthwhile occupations are professional occupations.

In addition to the theoretical implications of these data there are some philosophical implications which must be considered; philosophical with respect to the philosophy of Contra Costa College. If this college proposes to serve all people of the Richmond community, then it must make provisions to insure their academic success and well-being while they are in school. Such programs as developmental education, tutoring, and financial aid are essential and therefore, cannot be ignored. Without these programs, the Mobile Counseling Center and other similar projects will be little more than exercises in futility.

Work History

Of the 150 clients referred to the Mobile Counseling Center for individual counseling during the 1969-70 school year, only about 35% of them had work histories. The remaining 65% were either too young to work or had difficulty securing employment because of their lack of education. Approximately 10% of the 35% group had performed jobs in a variety of fields such as warehousing, building maintenance, construction, education and food service. The remaining 90% of the 35% group had or were currently employed in Neighborhood Youth Corps programs. They had had jobs such as clerical work, social service aids, recreation aids, and buildings and grounds maintenance.

Their attitudes about work were generally positive. That is, they all expressed a willingness to work as long as they were not harassed or badgered by their supervisors. This was especially true of the Neighborhood Youth Corps workers. This was evidenced by their supervisor's expressions of satisfaction with the NYC workers' improvement in work behavior and attitudes about work over the last year.

Their reasons for working were essentially the same as those of last year's clients. That is, they worked because in many instances it was their only source of income. It was a means by which they could fulfill their needs--a means of survival.

Personal Needs

During the 1968-69 school year, most of the clients who received individual counseling in the Mobile Center expressed their personal needs in economic terms. This means that most of them were interested in short term (one year or less) job training or immediate employment. The vast majority of them rejected college as an alternative solution to their problems. Perhaps their rejection was partially attributable to their perceptions of the role of the Mobile Counseling Center. During the first year, most people believed that the Mobile Center was a job placement center. It is also possible that they rejected college, more specifically Contra Costa College, as an alternative because they had no evidence of Contra Costa's commitment to them. The Department of Special Programs did not exist, therefore, there were no special supportive services designed specifically for the economically poor and educationally underdeveloped student.

Clients who received individual counseling in the Mobile Center this year also expressed their personal needs in economic terms. However, most of them saw college as the only solution to their problems. They were interested in employment only for the purpose of sustaining themselves while in college. Many of this year's clients seemed to have a higher degree of sophistication than those of last year. They asked questions about courses and course content. They wanted to know about, as one client so ably put it, "programs designed to teach people how to learn."

Expectations of the Counselor

This part of the report is always very difficult to prepare because the comments contained here in are not based on objective data. The writer must be very careful not to project his own feelings into them. Despite their subjective nature, these comments are not completely without bases.

At some point during the course of every interview the counselor raised the question: What do you want me to do for you? A large percentage of the clients responded with statements such as: "What do you think I should do about . . .," "Do you think I should . . .," "Give me advice on how to . . .," etc. Their responses suggested they expected the counselor to be an all-knowing, all-seeing, self-righteous person who, through some omnipotent powers, could solve their (the clients) problems instantaneously. Perhaps their definition of the counselor's role was unfounded, but most likely it was derived from past experiences.

Before the end of the first interview, most clients realized that the Mobile counselor had no such powers. He saw his role as that of a helping person in the broadest sense of the term. His aim was to get the client totally involved in the counseling process for purposes of helping the client clarify his problem and think about ways of solving it. By the end of the third interview, most clients seemed to have modified their original definition of the counselor's role. This is evidenced by a change in the client's comportment by the end of the third interview. Most clients seemed less inhibited. They seemed to feel free to discuss themselves as well as their plans.

In summary, the writer suggests that when clients came to the Mobile Center for the first time, they expected to be told what to do, how to do, and when to do. By the end of the third interview they expected to be accepted as individuals who rightfully should be involved in shaping their own destinies.

This brief part of an interview should help to make the point clearer.

> Client: "Do you think I should register as a full-time student or a part-time student?"
> Counselor: "What do you want to do?"
> Client: "Hey wow! You just blew my mind."
> Counselor: "What do you mean?"
> Client: "Nobody ever asked me what I wanted to do."

Counselor's Personal Experiences

My personal experiences during the 1969-70 school year must necessarily be divided into two distinct categories: those involved in working with clients and those involved in working with my colleagues. The first year was understandably difficult because of the newness of the experiment, but this year has been far more difficult than I ever could have imagined, even in my wildest dreams.

I began the first year with a great deal of confidence, perhaps I was too idealistic to feel any different. I also knew that the concept of Mobile Counseling was completely new and regardless of the outcome I had nothing to lose. This year was different; I started out with a great deal of apprehensiveness for a number of reasons. First, the Contra Costa College Mobile Counseling Center had become a working model for all future mobile centers and I believed I had the complete responsibility for keeping it alive. For the first time in a number of years, I was worried about my image. It was only after careful self-evaluation and genuine moral support from my close friends that I realized that there was no need to worry. The mobile center had been successful for one year and it would continue to be successful for years to come, regardless of the counselor.

Secondly, I was concerned about the community's perception of the mobile unit. Last year it had been perceived as a job placement center, and fortunately there were a number of entry level jobs and job training programs to which clients could be referred. Because of the political climate of the state and the nation, I knew that most of the programs that existed last year were no longer in existence, so I became worried about the possibility of the Mobile Counseling Center being labeled a "jive" operation because it could not place its clients. It became necessary to re-evaluate all placement resources available to the Mobile Center. It soon became apparent that the college provided the greatest possibility for placement; therefore, it would be wise to concentrate on recruitment. It turned out that most of the clients wanted to go to college anyway, so that problem was soon solved.

Finally, at the beginning of this year, my conflicts relative to the hostile client had not been fully resolved. I was not worried so much about what the client would do but rather, what I would do. Would I become irate and possibly lose him as a client? I was not sure until the problem presented itself. One day a young man, who was obviously upset, came in to see me. I introduced myself and began the interview. Before I had finished talking he began to curse. He called me every name that he could think of in about a five-minute period. Interestingly enough, I listened to him unabashed by it all and finally asked him what he wanted me to do. Before the interview was over he had apologized for his behavior and was discussing his reasons for being upset. I felt good after that interview and since that time I have seen two similar clients, both of whom I have been able to deal with rationally.

My experiences in working with my colleagues were far more frustrating than those which I have previously mentioned. I was frustrated because I felt rejected by the same people who endorsed my appointment at the outset. That feeling of rejection was, in my opinion, not without justification. When the 1969 report was published, I asked for a critical evaluation of it; as of this writing I have received no official statement, pro or con, from the counseling department. I thought it was rather ironic, that the people who were most qualified to offer constructive criticism seemed the least interested in doing so.

In addition, the department adopted a program of in-service training on a regular basis, where representatives from special programs such as Vocational Education, Manpower Development, Work Incentive Program, Health Sciences, etc., were invited to discuss their programs with the counselors. For some reason, the Mobile Counseling Center was never considered. I'm confident that there is another side to this story, but regardless of the explanations given I cannot deny my feelings.

The fact that I received little support from my immediate supervisor was equally frustrating. I never expected rewards, but I did expect support. At this point, I can only say that I am glad I was able to survive this year. This is not to suggest that I'm ready to quit, for I feel that this work must continue with or without support.

Problem

After two years of operation, one of the greatest problems of the Mobile Center is that of having a place to refer clients whenever they are ready to be placed. This has been one of the problems of out-reach programs since their inception. Another problem is that of staffing. It is believed that a larger part of the brown and poor white communities could be reached if there were counselors in the Mobile Center with whom they could identify.

TABLE VIII PLACEMENTS N = 150

Type of Placement	Number Placed	% Placed
College (including Summer Readiness)	43	29
Job Training	17	11
Referred to Other Agencies for Counseling or Job Placement	45	30
Not Placed	45	30

Table VIII shows that 30% of the clients who received individual counseling were not placed. That should not be taken in a literal sense. Many clients came to the Mobile Center for the sole purpose of getting information. In many instances, it was not possible to place them because they were either already employed, too young to enter college, or not interested in employment or college.

Clients Attitudes About the Mobile Counseling Center

This report would not be complete without providing some evidence of the clients' attitudes about the Mobile Center. It was felt that this information could best be obtained by using a questionnaire. Eighty questionnaires were mailed to clients who had received counseling in the Mobile Center this year. There were two reasons for this. 1) Only 80 of this year's clients had three or more interviews, 2) A majority of last year's clients did not have follow-up interviews. For these reasons it was felt that this year's client group would be a more representative sample. Sixty-three percent of the questionnaires were returned. Sixty percent were returned completed and three percent were returned because of no forwarding address. N=80. The percentages of client responses to each question are indicated in the blanks.

CONTRA COSTA COLLEGE MOBILE COUNSELING CENTER

COUNSELEE QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer the questions listed below by making a check mark on the line that more closely fits your situation. Check as many lines as you have to in order to correctly describe your case. If no line fits your case, write your answer on the line labeled "other."

1. Did you find out about the Mobile Counseling Center through a:

   32% Friend 0 School Counselor 20% Social Worker 10% Employment Counselor

   12% Probation Officer 13% Community Worker Other 13%

2. You used the Mobile Counseling Center to get counseling about:

   33% College 6% A Job 47% Career Planning 5% Job Training

   7% Personal Problems 1% Financial Aid Other 1%

3. Do you feel that the Mobile Counseling Center helped you?

   93% Yes 7% No If yes, check number 4, if no, check number 4a.

4. You feel that you were helped because you got:

   17% Your questions answered 7% A Job 33% Into College 8% Into a Training Program 13% Help with a Personal Problem Other 15%

4a. You feel that you were not helped because:

   ____ You got the run-around ____ You did not get what you wanted

   ____ The Counselor did not keep his promises Other 7%

5. How many times did you have appointments with the Mobile Counseling Center?

   42% One 30% Two 28% Three or more

6. You like the Mobile Counseling Center because:

   23% It is private 15% It comes to you 16% You don't have to rush through an interview 23% It helped you Other 16%

6a. You dislike the Mobile Counseling Center because:

_____You have to wait too long to get what you want 7% It is hard to make an appointment _____You cannot depend on the Counselor Other _____

_____

7. Would you use the Mobile Counseling Center again?

100% Yes _____No

8. Would you tell your friends about it if they needed help?

100% Yes _____No

9. How many people have you told about the Mobile Counseling Center?

30% None 22% One 23% Two 25% Three or more

10. Would you like to see the Mobile Counseling Center continued?

100% Yes _____No

Section V

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is a need for a direct means of disseminating information to high school dropouts, the unemployed, the poor, and the community at large.

   In view of its rapid growth and ever-increasing responsibilities to the community, Contra Costa College can no longer rely on conventional means for the dissemination of information. A more direct means of communication is not only desirable but essential. Since it is impractical to assign counselors to high schools as well as community agencies, and since it is essential that close relationships be maintained with both, the Mobile Center could be used to perform one of those functions.

2. Many people in the Richmond community are unaware or have misinformation about the educational and occupational opportunities available to them at Contra Costa College and at other institutions throughout Contra Costa County. There is a significant percentage of people who are misinformed about Contra Costa College. They do not know that it is a free public institution. They are unaware of the articulation agreements between Contra Costa College and the four-year colleges. They are unaware of the trade and technical program offerings at the college. For two years, the Mobile Center has disseminated corrected versions of such information in a personalized manner and has resultantly made some significant strides toward improving this college's image in the community.

3. Agency personnel seem to welcome the opportunity to work directly with a college representative whom they all know.

4. Many people seem to be more responsive when they are in private, in their own environment, and talking with someone whom they feel they can trust.

5. The Mobile Counseling Center is flexible enough to work successfully for the college as well as for agencies in the community. It has performed recruiting functions for the college as well as for job training programs off campus.

6. People who have visited the Mobile Center see it as a genuine source of assistance where all efforts are in behalf of the client.

7. Poor and minority people seem to appreciate someone who is honest, dedicated, and sensitive to their needs.

Section VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. This project be continued.

2. The unit be completed with drinking water, adequate heating, additional lighting, and audio-visual equipment as deemed necessary.

3. A full-time clerk-receptionist be hired to take care of clerical responsibilities and communications.

4. Serious consideration be given to the present administrative structure so as to insure maximum efficiency. It is perhaps more in keeping with the nature of the Mobile Center to reassign it to community services for administration.

5. Every effort be made to provide a means by which students who are recruited through the Mobile Counseling Center can enter Contra Costa College at any time during the course of any semester.

6. The counseling department and indeed the college reevaluate its commitment to the educationally underdeveloped student.

7. Consideration be given to expanding the Mobile Center counseling staff to include a counselor, who can identify with the brown and poor white communities.